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DE RUEHKH #0783/01 1421135
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 211135Z MAY 08
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0886
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000783

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/SPG, AF/SE WILLIAMSON, AF/C, NSC FOR BPITTMAN
AND CHUDSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/04/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: ARAB REBEL LEADER PROMISES MORE ATTACKS ON GOS

REF: A. 2007 KHARTOUM 1968
[1](#)B. 2007 KHARTOUM 1978

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)
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[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY On May 19 and 20, Anwar Ahmed Khater, the leader of the Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) (and "Darfur's emerging Arab leader" according to one Darfur expert), told poloff that Chadian officials and JEM leaders attempted to recruit his Arab rebel movement prior to JEM's May 10 attack on Omdurman in January 2008. Khater stated that he rejected the offer due to Khalil Ibrahim's Islamic ideology, and boasted that JEM would have succeeded had Darfuri Arab fighters joined them in the attack. Khater said that after signing a deal in February 2008 with the Government of Sudan, he has grown frustrated with the GoS's broken promises and that he has now started to mobilize a force of 3,000 fighters against the Government. END SUMMARY

[1](#)2. (C) On May 19, Khater requested that poloff meet him alone without any local Sudanese embassy staff. Khater met poloff one block outside of the U.S. Embassy, and then walking fifteen feet in front of poloff, Khater directed him to a nearby unidentified office of a "friend of a friend" where two other members of SRF waited. SRF members locked the door from the outside and stood watch in the hall during the meeting. On May 20, poloff met Khater at a local restaurant after Khater discretely changed the location of the meeting twice "for security reasons."

SRF OPERATIONS IN 2007

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[1](#)3. (C) Khater stated that in early 2007 he promptly returned to his rebel activities after his release from nine months of detainment and torture in 2006-2007. Since then Khater said he has re-mobilized a "very big force of at least three thousand registered Arab nomads who realize that they have been used and exploited by the Government of Sudan." He said that unlike Musa Hilal, Ahmed Humeidan Dagolo ("Hamati,"), and other notorious Arab militia leaders, he was not personally involved in any of the GoS-organized janjaweed groups. He claimed that while some Arabs have been armed by the GoS, that his fighters are now independent of the government, self-sustained, and organized into separate cells. He claimed that his forces conducted four major operations in 2007, including attacks on Jebel Kawra, Jebel Silik, Jebel Koina, and Jebel Marra. He said that his fighters led the attack on Jebel Kawra from April 2007, although it was widely attributed to the "Oppressed Soldiers" (jund al-mazloom) made up of former government troops. Khater said that he had a short-lived relationship with Hamati (a fellow Arab rebel leader from the populous Rizeigat turned government crony based outside of Niyala- reftels) but that the alliance was never genuine, "as we were just trying to exploit the relationship and recruit his fighters."

CUTTING A DEAL WITH GOVERNMENT

14. (C) Khater said that in December 2007 and January 2008, GoS forces increased their attacks and aerial bombardment on SRF forces in Jebel Silik and Jebel Koina. He added that GoS security and intelligence officers also detained five members of his family from Zalingei for several months. He said that this military escalation and attack on his family forced him to cut a deal with the government in February 2008. He said that "Abu Guroun", the NISS director for West Darfur state based in El-Geneina brokered the deal that included provisions for development projects for regions inhabited by Darfur's Arabs, government positions for himself and leaders of his forces, and greater employment and opportunities for Darfur's Arabs in the civil service. After signing the deal, Khater said that his family was released and that he moved to Khartoum, expecting the agreement to be implemented. "Now, three months after the deal, I've realized that the government will never implement any agreement it signs, whether it is with the SPLM, Minni Minnawi, or me, and I'm ready to start the fight again," stated Khater. (Note: Khater promised to provide a copy of the written agreement to poloff at their next meeting. End Note).

MORE SRF ATTACKS TO COME

15. (C) Khater stated that his group intends to carry out more military operations in 2008. He stated that "the only way to rise to power in Sudan is through taking up arms" and that "political and military work go hand in hand in Sudan." He said that while SRF pursues military options, it will also continue to seek official representation at events sponsored

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by the UN/AU mediation team.

CONTACTS WITH JEM AND CHAD

16. (C) Khater stated that while in Chad in January 2008, JEM forces and Chadian officials invited Khater and his SRF forces to conduct joint operations against the Sudanese regime. Khater stated that he turned down the offer as he disagreed with the "Islamic agenda" of Khalil Ibrahim. He said that the Chadian officials were not interested in directly supporting SRF unless he aligned with JEM. Khater said that two of his own SRF fighters directly disobeyed his orders and participated in JEM's attack on Omdurman and that they have been detained by Sudanese security. Khater stated that he knew of the JEM attack almost nine days before it occurred, as his soldiers in the field informed him of JEM movements. He added, "Many of the fighters JEM used in this operation were not the tough Zaghawas from Darfur. If the operation had Arab support, they would have easily taken the city."

REQUEST FOR SUPPORT

17. (C) Khater said that in the next two months, the SRF will continue to seek channels of support for logistics, media operations, and its political program. He stated that SRF leadership would like to travel outside of Sudan, and that he admires how SLA's Abdul Wahid Nur has been able to lead his fighters from Paris (somewhat of an exaggeration for the stolid and sedentary Abdul Wahid). "I want to get outside of Sudan where I can move and speak freely like Abdul Wahid," stated Khater. Khater said that he would like to set up SRF offices in Cairo, Washington, and London, and organize conferences to publicize the situation of Darfur's exploited and marginalized Arabs. Khater stated that he wants "direct U.S. involvement on the issue of Darfur's Arabs" and said that "we will give you anything you want if you help us get outside of Sudan." Poloff urged Khater to continue to meet with U.S. officials and to engage in the political process, but cautioned that it is very unlikely that the U.S. could provide any direct support to his movement. Khater's comments underscore a basic reality (and challenge for Khartoum) among

Darfur's Arab tribes, they will go with whomever promises and delivers the best deal. This is also true of many janjaweed leaders as well.

COMMENT:

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18. (C) Multiple observers (from leaders of the UN/AU's negotiation team to Darfur expert Alex de Waal), all consider Khater to be an important player that carries weight with Darfur's disgruntled Arabs. Nonetheless, Khater appeared quite paranoid (and rightfully so if he was imprisoned and tortured for as long as he claims) and confused about his next steps, especially as he desperately and unrealistically asked for U.S. support. Khater appears to be a prime example of an Arab opposition leader, who (as we have reported before) demonstrates "a flexible diplomatic approach:" the tribes keep a foot in the Government camp, a foot in the rebel camp, and throw their weight behind whichever side appears to get the better deal during negotiations. At the moment, Khater has seen the futility of the Government camp, and it is likely that we will hear of more of his rebel activities in late 2008 if he is not swept up again by the authorities.

BIO NOTE:

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19. (C) Khater was born in Zalingei, West Darfur in 1976. He is from the Mahamid tribe (the same tribe as infamous janjaweed leader Musa Hilal.) After graduation from secondary school, he joined the Sudanese Armed Forces for his mandatory military service where he "learned a lot about military strategy and how to use weapons." Khater graduated from the College of Technology in Khartoum in 2004, after which he "joined the struggle in Darfur." Khater reported that he was imprisoned and detained for nine months total in 2006-2007 for his rebel activities. Darfur experts Julie Flint and Alex de Waal have both reported on Khater, including one article "Darfur's Emerging Arab Leader Under Government Assault," available at www.ssrc.org.

FERNANDEZ